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Anzac & After

Frank E.
Westbrook

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ANZAC AND AFTER

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ANZAC AND AFTER

A COLLECTION OF POEMS

BY

F. E. WESTBROOK

LONDON

DUCKWORTH AND CO.

3 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

TO
MY FATHER
MY COUNSELLOR, COMRADE, AND DEAREST COMPANION
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

F. E. W.

First published 1916.

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INTRODUCTION

IN byways of duty that led me through danger,
By valleys and slopes that were tinted with
 blood,
In crackle of Maxims and roar of the shrapnel,
When death in its coming rolled up to the
 flood.
In heat, dust, and vermin, and stench of the
 fallen,
In sweat and in sorrow, in struggle and toil,
In waiting and watching, in nerve-racking vigil,
In sap and in traverse entrenched in the soil.
In dreams of Australia and hours of re-
 membrance,
In longing and sighing, in hope and regret,
In vision of bushlands and homes of my
 fathers,
In myriad scenes that a man can't forget.
In pride in our army the men of Australia,
The living, the broken, the maimed, and the
 dead,
In sympathy keen for the loved ones who
 sorrow,
In pride of the cause that we've fought for and
 bled.

In brilliant transcendence of sunrise and
splendour,
In colours of grandeur the sunsets have worn,
In shade, shine and shower, and days of fore-
bodings,
In mirth and grey sorrow these verses were
born.

ANZAC, *April 25 to Oct. 8, 1915.*

THE MUSIC OF THE GUNS

WHEN the summer day is falling into twilight's
fading light

And the guns are booming everywhere around,
In their raucous voices shouting proud defiance
to the night,

We can feel a store of comfort in their sound.
In their smashing, crashing rattle we are fighting
freedom's battle

And we're out to win as Empire's loyal sons,
In their belching fiery breath there is red and
sudden death

To her enemies out there before our guns.

When the slopes and hills are gleaming in the
flares from trench to trench,

When the rifles crackle like a wood alight,
The clouds of fumes come rolling with the burn-
ing powder's stench

And the flashes show in lines across the night.
Every shot that goes a-flashing through the lead-
torn night a-crashing

Is an effort to an ultimate result,
Every cartridge we expend is one less toward
the end

Of the menace of the vile Teutonic Kult.

All the foul man-killing terrors and the ripping
shot and shell

Cannot break the moral spirit of the ranks,
For amid the awful chaos when they loose the
bars of hell

They're as calm as if the foe were firing
blanks.

All the hail of high explosive and the awful gas
corrosive,

Any terror that the Teuton can invent,
Cannot daunt us in the fight; through the curtain
of the night

We can hear our guns, and hearing rest
content.

There is music in their booming when they're
sending blow for blow,

In the whistling of the shells upon the
way,

That will burst in flame and fury on the hidden
distant foe,

And we glory in their firing night and day.
And if I must pass in battle, let it be amid their
rattle,

One of Austral's humble freedom-loving sons,
Happy, thus thrice happy I, quite content if
need be die

In the rhythmic music of Australia's guns.

ANZAC, *May* 1915.

DO IT NOW !

11

DO IT NOW !

WOUNDED GUNNER'S APPEAL

THERE'S a cry coming up from the traverse and
trench,
From shell-shattered craters where bravest
hearts blench ;
They are fighting and dying out there in the
stench

Of the dead.

From shot-riddled pits they are calling you,
son ;
There's work for you there with your bayonet
and gun,
To finish the work they've so grimly begun
And battled and bled.

Can you, while they bleed, still cling to your
creed,
Your self-loving creed, in the hour of their
need ?
An appeal to your manhood—Remember your
breed !

Enlist. Do it now !

There's a call from the ranks of a ghostly
parade,
A beckoning hand with a blood-spattered
blade—
They whose last part in the struggle is played
Over there.

The gaps must be filled of the valiant slain.
Listen ! you'll hear them, aye, listen again !
They say, " Have we died for a shibboleth vain ?
Do you care ? "

All you have and hold dear, your truest and
near,
Are hung in the balance. Your duty is clear !
Weigh these against dallying, halting, and fear.
Enlist. Do it now !

1916.

LINDENOW

GIPPSLAND, VICTORIA

HERE where the Goddess of peace and quiet
And Muses all from the place have fled,
Men distraught in their hate run riot,
And gibbering death is crowned head,
Nightfall gathers her armies sable,
Her screed has little but hate to show,
There comes to my mind like an oft-told fable
My castle a-dwelling by Lindenow.

When night is full of the red death's screaming,
Maddened by slaughter a fiend accurst,
His altar fires in the shell-burst's gleaming,
Paeans of lust in the shrapnel-burst,
Above the roar and the smoke of battle
I can see the Mitchell, and sweet and low
I can hear the call of the roaming cattle
In the homestead paddocks by Lindenow.

Where the sun's last rays in their dying quiver
Gild the fronds of the drifting sedge,
Spear-shafts hurled to the silver river
Through willow trees at the water's edge,
Shadows deep on the waters swinging
To and fro in the Mitchell's flow,
Soft the breeze through the gaunt trees singing
Over the clearing to Lindenow.

Water link from the Baw Baw's falling,
Winding down to the ocean's breast
By fern-decked bowers where bell-birds calling
Sing good-night to the tinted West,
Clear through the bluffs and the rocky ledges
Or flats as rich as the Mitchell know
Of springing maize in its soft green wedges
Riverward pointing by Lindenow.

Here where the virgin-clad spring weather
Kindled the wattle trees' lambent fire,
Songs of birds and the flashing feather,
Life the end of the path desire.
And now to-night I can sit and listen
And hear the song of the Mitchell's flow,
Catch the glint as the moonbeams glisten
On her smooth broad bosom by Lindenow.

See the smoke from the homestead lifting,
The blinking eyes of its lamps ashine,
Hear the rune of the horse-bells drifting,
The low soft call of the browsing kine,
The clinging scent of the La France roses
Drifting down on the night wind sough—
I hearken and gaze and my heart reposes
While memory lingers by Lindenow.

If the clinging folds of the Ancient Reaper
Cover me close to the Earth's warm breast,
Then shall honour be my soul's keeper,
Duty contented will bless my rest.
If freedom of flight to my soul be given,
I know of a surety I must go
To the nearest approach that I know to Heaven,
Home, Australia, and Lindenow.

ANZAC, *June 1915.*

THE FALLEN

O SLEEP, sleep on the wings of night,
Shroud all the gold of dying day,
The last spear-shafts of ruddy light
In purpling shadows melt away.
Come regally, O night, and crown
With blazing stars their common grave,
The new-turned earth mould sere and brown,
Where sleep the brave.

Shed soft oblivion o'er their rest,
Thy maiden's grey their pillows smooth,
Lay sweet nepenthe on each breast,
Their dreaming roothe.
O south wind, lavishly oh fling
Soft incense as you passing sigh
Of wattle fire, and crooning sing
Of tall trees soughing lullaby.

Of silver notes of gurgling streams
That prattle o'er their pebbly bed,

Such scenes as these and sunset's gleams
With rest are wed.
O lapping waves, break soft and croon
A benison from out the deep
In your soft singing, soothing rune
For these our dead.

Awake, the slender hands of fame
Are clasping banners of the day,
The silver flash of glory's flame
Shines on the laurel wreath and bay;
Triumphant still, freedom and truth,
Our lode-star and their oriflamme,
The jewel of Australia's youth
Is still aflame.

These brave, who died that silver bands
Of Austral's honour might not break,
We leave within their Maker's hands
For Austral's sake.

GALLIPOLI, *July* 1915.

IN SYMPATHY

BDR. A. M'GIBBON, KILLED JUNE 10, 1915

WHAT can we say? The kindest phrases mar
The heartfelt sympathy we feel
For those who in their sorrow kneel
To mourn their loss. Our words but jar
In trite expressions. To his dear afar

In clinging strands of bonds of human grief
We twine for him and them the rue and laurel
leaf.

Call him not dead. For without stain
His name all-glorious purged of earthly stain
We cherish lovingly ; not all in vain
The sacrifice. Sleep on, brave heart, our loss
Is softened by our pride ; though freedom's
gain
For thee and thine is shadowed by a cross.

ANZAC, July 20, 1915.

*From Bill-Jim in the Trenches to plain
Bill at home.*

“ DO YER BIT ”

WHEN you've shouted “ Tipperary ” till yer
throat's as dry as chips
And you've chorused “ Save the King ” to
beat the band,
When yer've raised yer brimmin' bumper in yer
toastin' to yer lips
And downed yer glass with no uncertain
'and,
'As it ever dawned upon yer that it's deeds not
words we want,
And it's nearly time yer took yer fighting
kit,
For we're out for keeps for freedom, and it ain't
no pleasure jaunt,
And it's nearly time yer did yer little bit.

When yer fling yer adulation to the players “ on
the ball ”

Who are battlin’ for the small elusive sphere,
When yer laud yer fancy player in a wild
ecstatic call

And the roar comes from the grand-stand tier
on tier,

Do yer know the game we’re playing is the
sternest ever played,

And our side in sweat and blood and tears are
knit,

And our ranks are thinned out daily by the
reapers’ sharpened blade—

Cobber Bill, it’s time yer did yer little bit.

You who play about in comfort round a petti-
coated hem

And sparkling eyes that hold yer from the
front,

Work it out as what might ’appen to the old
folk and to them

If the boys had never borne the battle’s
brunt.

Yes, it’s worse than death or murder is the
methods of the Hun,

On his Kultur all the world has paused to
spit.

If yer love yer girl and old folks, stir yer stumps
and get a gun

And come out here and do yer little bit.

Can yer revel in the freedom that our blood is
flowin’ for?

It’s like a patch of ’ell when there’s a scrap.

Can yer stick it out forgettin' all yer cobbers at
the war

And never think you ought to fill a gap ?

Say, it's nearly time yer chucked it, roused yer
sleepin' manhood's flame,

Got yer military pack and shouldered it ;

Got en route for France (or elsewhere), thus in
doing play the game,

And once out here we know you'll do your bit.

We're not growlin' or complainin', though it's
dreary, weary work,

And death lurks in the sea and sky and air ;

We 'ave got a good 'alf Nelson on the stubborn
fightin' Turk

And we're needin' you to help us keep it there,
For it takes us all to hold him in a strangulation
grip—

The moral is we want more men to wit—

He's a mighty slippery josser, and before our
fingers slip

Come out here, old son, and do your little bit.

ANZAC, August 1915.

MEMORY

SONNET

WHEN nightfall flings her shadows everywhere
Her hallowed form in soft reliefs appear,
The flowers in her hair the more endear
The cypress wreath the chaplet that I wear,

LINES FOR A LADY'S AUTOGRAPH 19

Lo, in her hands the light of other days,
Of star-lit skies and singing birds and flowers,
Where beauty lent her romance to the hours
As roses lend their fragrance to the air.

And in her eyes the tender wistful gleams,
Of love and home, the jewels that I keep
Stored in my heart set all their rays astream,
When memory drooping turns aside to weep,
Flees just away as broken morning dreams.
I gaze and lo, grey duty's form is there.

LINES FOR A LADY'S AUTOGRAPH

SAD seething seas, the sea-gulls' eerie cry,
Last gleams of day from rocky ledges wane,
The winds sob out the dying day's good-bye,
Grey clouds hang low with mists of driving
rain.

Gay songs of birds and fragrant blooming
flowers,
Sweet sunlight on the shimmering, glimmering
sea,
Bright drops of rain from lately fallen showers
Bejewelled by the sunlight o'er the dewy lea.

In sunshine, rain, grey clouds, and drifting shade,
Tears, smiles, and joys our little lives are run.
Hopes, meetings, partings, and our part is
played,
Shine, shower, and shade, and then the setting
sun.

So, friend of mine, my dearest wish is this,
That shadow, cloud and tear, and fleeting
smile
But serve to prove to you the dearer bliss
Of things that make our living worth the
while.

THE UNDERTONE

THE brazen bugles' blaring notes,
The rhythmic tread of marching feet,
And rousing drums impassioned beat,
The cheering from a thousand throats,
The lordly pomp of martial pride,
The roaring flames of murder, lust,
And flashing play of sabre thrust,
The crash of cannon far and wide,
The echoes of the victor's cries,
And anguished call of fallen men,
The silence of the slain, and then
I hear the song that underlies
The chorus born of death and hate
That croons and plays and softly sings
Of vanished peace and sweeter things
That chant above a tyrant Fate:
The call of love in subtle part,
The yearning of a sister's breast,
The sad sweet rune of fame's bequest,
The sorrow of the mother-heart.

ANZAC, August.

ATTACK

*Inspired by the furious bombardment of the Lone
Pine position prior to the never-to-be-forgotten
charge of the gallant Anzacs.*

CRASH, O grey guns, in your fury,
Roar while earth's bosom lies mute,
For ye are the judge and the jury,
The voice of the nations' dispute.

Crash and your missiles go screaming
Forth on their mission of death,
The blaze of your fire-flashes streaming
Foewards in red fashioned breath.

Speak of our steadfast reliance,
Shout in your breathing of fire
The paeans of hate and defiance
And weight of our militant ire.

Crackle, O rifles, and sputter
In fire-flashing lines in the night,
Your voices in incessant mutter
The deep undertone of the fight.

Shout as your bayonets redden
And gleam in the play of the thrust,
Sing of a glory that shed in
The light of a murder-mad lust.

Crash, O grey guns, in your chorus,
Sputter, ye rifles, in flame,
Fling to the foe out before us
The might of the motherland's name.

Victory with deft subtle fingers
Weaves bay for earth's struggling sons,
With laurel she hovers and lingers
For those of the mightiest guns.

So crash, O grey guns, in your fury,
Roar while earth's bosom lies mute,
For ye are the judge and the jury,
The voice of the nations' dispute.

ANZAC, *August 6, 1915.*

SYMPATHY

SONNET

WHEN earthward came God's ministering angels
three,
Love, Mercy, Hope, out of the abyss cast
Of human passion, from their chaos vast
They bore a blossom tenderly.
Its petals all the blazoned emblems bore
Of blessed spirit trinity who drew
The flower from the deep, its being wore
The kiss of love and mercy's blessed dew
And hope in all her singing symphony.
Its blooms are twined in duty's flowing hair
And in the cypress wreath and rue they bear.
They flourish 'neath the ministering angels' care.
Men know the bloom and call it—Sympathy.

FAME

WHAT is fame ?

A flash from the darkness of oblivion,
Of forgetfulness and prejudices.

The sounds of recognition after silence,

The apex of ambition and attainment.

What is fame ?

The remembrance of deeds and misdeeds,

The names of heroes and knaves of great
cunning

On the lips of the populace and orators

With intent for good purposes or evil.

I hold no brief for wrong-doers,

But for the fame of our fair island,

Her gallant sons and nobler mothers,

In whose ears are sounds of sacrifice

And in whose nostrils is the incense of burnt
offering,

In their hair, cypress and rue.

What is fame ?

A sound mingled with beating of wings,

The dark-moving wing of the Angel Death,

Deathless, immortal, yet born of death and
sacrifice,

Singing above our fallen brave and living heroes.

Fame was born on the height of Gaba Tepe,

On the wave-bitten stretch of its beaches,

On the battle-scarred sides of its slopes,

In the breast of the gallant living,
In the bier of the honoured dead.

In the great heart of the nobler mothers
Fame revealed to the wondering world
The wondrous fighting gallantry of our men.

Until the last stars are crashing into oblivion
And darkness is thrust about us,
The last trump echoes o'er chaotic void,
Shall fame die not from the heart of mankind.

IN ABSENCE

I HEAR your voice in wavelets of the sea,
In soft winds Southern lullaby,
The night is full of radiant dreams of thee,
Though sundered far, sweetheart and I,
In absence drear.

I see your eyes in night's gay lamps ashine,
My sad heart sings of brighter days to be,
I hear you whispering "I am thine,"
I know you long for me
In absence, dear.

TWO FLOWERS

SONG

Two roses bloomed, O wondrous fair,
 And cast their fragrance everywhere;
 Love culled one rose and twined it in your hair,
 A perfect rose beyond a flower's compare.
 The other rose that blossoms in the care
 Of duty, I its fragrance share
 To-day. For sundered far, there
 Are the blooms that love and duty wear—
 Your flower and mine.

BROWN EYES

SONG

OH, two brown eyes where love-lit shadows
 swim
 Like pools asleep and lulled by evening's hymn.
 How can such two brown lustrous eyes
 Disturb my dreams with dreams of warmer skies,
 Of singing birds and scented flowers of spring,
 And sounds of Austral's bushlands whispering?
 Ah, I forget the miles of heaving sea
 That distance flings 'twixt love and me
 And two brown eyes.

IN EXILE

AUSTRALIA, my Australia, should e'er it be my
lot
To live in distant exile in lands that love thee
not,
Through all the days that follow the dreary
yearning years
The music of thy melodies will echo in my ears,
The voice of bushlands whispering, the glimpse
of moss-strewn dell,
The flowers on thy mountain side, more dear
than asphodel,
The bowers of fern and heather by which the
springtime waits,
And sets her myriad gems ashine within thy
wave-washed gates,
The flashing fire of wattle trees in league-long
rows will rise,
The glory of thy hill and plain will spring to
cheer my eyes,
Their rosaries of blossom, the incense of its
fire,
The perfume of its yellow beads, the breath of
my desire.

September o'er your kindly face will strew the
gifts of spring
With sweet boronia scent and flower and wild
clematis fling
With lavish hand. On sunlit slopes the
trembling dew-kissed leaves
Will steal the tints from sunset clouds and red
gold from the sheaves ;

Will fill your ears with melodies and twittering
songs of birds,
Soft rippling of the water pools where drink the
milking herds.

Ah, I will see thee ever, September at its best,
Thy songs and melodies of spring in flowery
verdure drest.

O keep thy kiss, my country, thy smiling mother
face,

For those who love and leave thee and find no
better place,

For those in distant exile who dare the hand
of Fate,

To keep thy well-loved honour and homes
inviolatè.

I ask no more, Australia, my dear loved native
isle,

Than this my longing hallows, the welcoming of
thy smile.

LEMNOS, *October 1915.*

NIGHT AND MORNING

SONG

A TENDER thought for the days that have been,
A recreant sigh,

Tipped with the gold dust of romance, I wean,
Homewards will fly.

Now evening wakes to bless

With starry night's caress,

My memories softly press

Tears to my eye.

A brighter thought for the days yet to be
As yet unborn,
A lilting song for my meeting with thee,
Dear love forlorn.
Peace all my longing fills,
I dry my tears. Now thrills
Soft o'er the distant hills
First rays of morn.

December 6, 1915.

EN PASSANT

THE hand of grey December flaunting every-
where,
The tragedies of yellow leaves and brown,
Sad leafless trees so stark and grim and bare,
The soft snow drifting gently, slowly down.

You come! A burst of sunshine floods the
dewy grass;
I watch the merry sunbeams playing pass,
Glad harbingers of brighter days of spring;
My ears are full of sweet hopes whispering.

The clouds will come. Leaves fall, again the
snow
(When you are gone) will cover all the flowers,
It will but play its part and serve to show
The brightness of our friendship's sunny
hours.

EPSOM, *December* 19, 1915.

THE BOYS OUT THERE

I MEET with the boys and the gay toasts pass,
The sparkling wine and the cheerful glass,
The long grey nights and the blazing log,
The clinging folds of the misty fog,
The comforts of homeland everywhere—
I think of the boys who are still out there.

Out there knee-deep in the slush and mud,
Splashed and mingled with comrades' blood,
Bearing the burden of those who lag
And fear to follow the dear old flag.
Sunset's grey with the tint of care,
For millions are thinking of those out there.

On earth goodwill and peace to men.
It sounds like a hollow mockery when
I mark the horrors my eyes have seen
(They can never know who have never been),
War stripped of its glittering glamour bare—
They see it naked, the boys out there.

They are fighting a sordid war, where trench
And traverse is full of a noisome stench ;
There's little of berserk warrior lust,
It's wait and suffer while bayonets rust.
It's easy to dream in an easy-chair,
But I dream and I pray for the boys out there.

Out there, wherever " out there " may be,
From Belgium's ruins to farthest sea,

Wherever the Union Jack still flies,
Flaunting its pride to the shot-torn skies.
For them our tenderest loving care—
God prosper the boys who are still out there.

EPSOM, *Xmas* 1915.

DEWS ON THE ROSES

SONGS

SUNBEAMS on the roses playing,
Making jewels of the dew ;
Morning zephyrs softly saying,
Roses everywhere for you.

Tears are on the lovely roses,
These are mine for thoughts of you,
And the sunshine but discloses
Beauty dearer for the dew.

Bend over me, O dearest heart of mine,
Little love of the rosebud lips ;
Let your eyes with a love divine
Light my way as my life's sun dips.

If I awake I want but this, that I
Can feel you near when I uncloset my eyes,
To keep your kiss upon my lips for aye—
This is for me a perfect Paradise.

January 11, 1916.

GOOD-BYE

EVACUATION OF GALLIPOLI, 1915

It has come to the last and it's good-bye, Bill,
I'm sick at the heart and sad
To leave you sleeping, old cobber, the best
That ever a swaddy had.

Somebody's bungled the job, it is said,
Who, it isn't for me to know,
But leaving the place where you fought and
died
Is stabbing my heart to go.

The lanes of mounds on the beach and hills,
In the spots that we fought to win,
The pledges of victories tardily won,
The graves of an Empire's kin.

We're going, but over Australia way
They will speak with a welling pride
Of sons who have answered the call to arms
From the city and countryside.

And whether we're leaving or whether we stay
It is much in a way the same,
For deep in the side of the green tree—Fame—
Is bitten Australia's name.

I'm going, but hoping to meet again
On the level the wily Turk,
For fighting and crouching in traverse and
trench
Is a sordid kind of work.

But war is war, and it's little to say
That our enemy played the game ;
He fought us as clean as a soldier may,
But I hate him just the same.

For I can't forget when you took the count
In a stunt to the left of Quinns',
A night as black as the ace of spades
Or a fallen Satyr's sins.

Soft sentiment isn't for soldier men,
But I swear when it's steel to steel
The point of my bayonet dripping red
Will prove of the things I feel.

So good-bye, Bill, if the Fates are kind
When the wattle trees burst to flame,
I will twine a wreath at my saddle bow
To honour my comrade's name.

Or dozing along on the old stock horse,
In the wake of the straying sheep,
Little doubt that I'll dream of this shell-torn
spot
Where I left you here to sleep.

Asleep with honour I leave you now,
You died as you wished to die.
The days will be longer without you, Bill ;
Good-bye, old fellow, good-bye.

February 1916.

COLD

"There was a heavy fall of snow during the day, and later in the night the fall was heavier and impeded the traffic."—London newspaper item, February 6, 1916.

I'm standing lonely up Whitehall way
With a measure of ice at my feet,
I've an English wheeze and an English sneeze,
I'm soaked with the driving sleet.

The best that Blighty can give to us
Is ours and we can't forget,
But all the same (and who will blame)
My heart's in Australia yet.

I'm standing watching the traffic pass,
I'm dreaming of Southern heat,
The noise of the brakes as the car wheel takes
The crossings at Flinders Street.

Or Sydney side where the South winds swoon
To die in the harbour's bays,
The lilting splash as the breakers dash
On Coogee on Surfing days.

The soft-ringed blue of the circling hills,
The keepers of Adelaide,
My memory gleans from a thousand scenes,
Out there where my feet have strayed.

Of wattle trees in a flame of bloom,
The 'roos in the Mitchell grass,
The fields of grain and the salt bush plain,
The creeks that the drovers pass.

I break the spell, but I pause to smile ;
I'm glad at my heart I'm here ;
I've done my share for my own out there,
The land that we hold so dear.

So I stand and watch as the drifting snow
The city in white wraps fold,
I've a snuffling wheeze, a shattering sneeze,
And a shivering English cold.

8.3.16.

PERCY

A SOLDIER SWELL

LORD, wouldn't he swank it in Leicester Square,
Or strolling along the Strand,
His glass a goggle in one glad eye
And his gold-tipped cane in hand.

"Bai Jove, what ! what !" I can hear him say,
This swaddy remittance man ;
In Cairo we heckled him right and left
As only our soldiers can.

I heard his "damn " as the bullets sang
And the hillsides flashed with flame,
In April days where history framed
With laurels Australia's name.

His bayonet flashed in the misty dawn
And his blue blood blazed to flame,
He was up in the van where the best men go
In our first red dash to fame.

There was never a sortie or risky stunt
(There were always enough and to spare),
When death lurked grinning in every bush,
That "Percival" was not there.

There's a wooden cross on the Anzac slopes,
On his grave in the red-brown clay,
Where a brave man sleeps his last long sleep
Or I wouldn't be here to-day.

What wouldn't I forfeit to have him here
With his monocle swank and cane,
To hear the words that we loved to mock
Fall pat from his lips again.

He was a fellow we loved to bait,
The knut with a capital "K,"
But I'd give the best that I own and more
To have him with me to-day.

For he proved his breed when the bolts were
loosed
Out there from the gates of hell,
And he died as game as a soldier may,
This Percy, the soldier swell.

WHY?

WHY did I go to the wars? "Dunno."
No doubt it was Destiny forced me to go,
I had dashed little knowledge of national things
Pertaining to treaties and statutes and kings;
A hazy idea that a 'ell of a scrap
Was twisting and changing the tints on the map;
Grim tellings of slaughter and terrible shame,
And capping them all was Germany's name;
Of fates worse than death for a mother and maid,
Perhaps through it all I was somewhat afraid
When remembering those who are dearer to me
Than my life. And, yes, there may be
In the thoughts of their honour an impelling
spur
To make things quite sure for my mother and
Her.
Perhaps 'twas some writer or speaker I'd heard,
The blood of my ancestors wakened and stirred,
And flung to my brain an appeal to my breed.
Mayhap I followed some other chap's lead.
Or was the natural love of a scrap
Some sort of dare-devil that wakes in a chap,
That challenges death for a jest or a taunt,
The sheer joy of living that nothing will daunt.
I dunno, but I've fought and I've been through
the mill.
What made me a soldier's a mystery still;
But home's not a home if it's not worth a fight—
All things put together I know I've done right.
Through danger and dark days and death I am
here,
I'm not learned or clever, but one thing is clear,

WHAT OF THE MEN WHO STRIKE! 37

I've a lot to be lost and dern little to gain,
But if things were reversed I'd just do it again;
For I know (for I've been) that war is just hell,
Where death lurks with vermin and noise and
foul smell,
But all things considered I'd go out once more,
Though I'll never know rightly what takes me
to war.

LONDON, 26.3.16.

WHAT OF THE MEN WHO STRIKE!

Love for our Tars who are manning our ships,
Who are waiting behind their guns,
The guns that are keeping in hiding meek
The fleet of the "frightful" Huns.

Love for the soldiers in khaki brown
In traverse and sap and trench,
Braving the horrors of shot and shell
And weight of the "dead-man" stench.

Pride for the workers that toil at the lathes,
The men at the bench and wheel,
Moulding the lash that will tame the foe
And summon the Hun "to heel."

For flyers, and fighters, and women who toil
In the place of the men who fight,
Our love and our pride to them every one
Who are welding an Empire's might.

People who finance and people who save,
Rank them whatever you like,
Pride in them all who are doing their bit—
But ! What of the men who Strike !

Who would barter the blood of a thousand
braves
For a measure of time or gold,
Loosing our grip on the monster's throat
(It's this when the truth is told).

“ Another place ! ” In a muddy trench,
An inferno of shot and shell,
When the power was held by a striker's act
The enemy guns to quell.

This is the place for the ones who slack,
Strikers and all of their clan,
They'll do their bit when it's steel on steel
And death for the weakest man.

What for them ? Ask of the men “ out there ” !
(This from them one and all)
A firing party, an open grave,
The traitor against the wall.

So for the ones who are selling our best
And helping the guns to spike ;
A cry from the traverse and trench and decks,
“ Short shrift for the men who strike.”

AFTER "THE ROSARY"

ALSO AFTER LEMNOS ISLAND, ALSO ANZAC

THE hours I spent on Lemnos bare
Are as a string of bones to me,
I rattle them and pause to swear
Most volubly.

Oh, bones of vanished rest and peace,
A pledge of long-lost L.S.D.,
I count them o'er and pay to Greece
My fervent B . . .

Oh, bully beef and biscuit hard,
Oh, black and milkless Army tea,
No more for me, poor war-worn bard,
No, not for me.

LEMNOS, *October.*

IRENE

How blithely speed the happy hours
When my dear love is near me,
And life is full of fragrant flowers
When she is near to cheer me.

I breathe my passion all unknown ;
My secret is my treasure ;
My heart, when I am left alone,
Beats true to fancy's measure.

Her winsome smiling rends my breast,
My passion's flame inspiring ;
I build with eager, tender zest
Dreams of my soul's desiring.

The patter of her passing feet
Like silver bells deride me,
My pulses tune to their dear beat
And peace is all denied me.

Last night as on my couch I lay
The hours dragged slow and weary,
Reluctant so to bring the day
That gave to me my dearie.

Ah, I would sing the virtues rare
Her lovely form embraces,
But were she fifty times less fair
I'd love her for her graces.

And thus my peace she charms away,
This sweet seductive syren ;
I can but live from day to day
To greet and meet my Irene.

EPSOM, *January 1916.*

THE BOND

I SAW a cloud darken two bonny brown eyes
As a recreant shadow flits over a lake,
Tremulous soft as the zephyrs arise
And leaves from an over-blown rose-blossom
shake.

Love mingled the shade of a poignant regret
With the light of delight and a radiant joy,
The precious gold glittered and shone till it met
The deadening touch of a darker alloy.

Her dear and mine, a brave brother who died
In a fight for grim Chunuk Bahr's shell-
shattered crest ;
War mingled for us a sad sorrow and pride,
A sad mutual throb of regret in each breast.

Oh, sympathy dear, the sweet healer of
hearts,
To whom love swings open her rose-coloured
doors,
Shall cheer me in visions ere memory departs
In days when I go forth again to the wars.

April 19, 1916.

THE DIFFERENCE

DELINQUENTS and defaulters all
Face the beak at four ;
Days are freely handed out—
Seems he has a little store.

Ten for you, and more for me,
The Adjutant's commands ;
Seems to me to indicate
Time hangs heavy on his hands.

In Hotel de Clink the days
 (Billy Khaki understands),
How the long hours crawl away,
 Time hangs heavier on *my* hands.

IMPROMPTU

DAYS of danger, death, and daring,
 Days of shadow, strew, and shine ;
Times of warfare's fitful flaring.
 Hours of toil in mound and mine.
Times of toil in trench and traverse
 Sad as sin in toil and sap ;
Hours of horrors grim that have us
 Haunted in our every nap.
Stench of stricken soldiers lying
 Dead and frightful out in front,
Long, long lanes of brave men dying
 After some successful stunt.

After these, sweet scenes of beauty,
 Homeland, Mother England's breast ;
After death and danger, duty,
 Sweeter are the hours of rest.

Warm hearts, kind friends, winsome smiling
 Steal the frownings from my face,
All the trace of war's defiling
 Gentle kindly hands efface.

When the hands of time have stricken
 War and sorrow from my path,
Memory's song my pulse will quicken
 In a dulcet aftermath.

Sweet tones deadening sounds of sorrow,
Sadness, wounds, and death and hate ;
All the hours of life's to-morrow
Will keep the song inviolate.

LONGING

I'm tired to death of the city streets,
The walls and their height and grime ;
The pattering beat of the hustling feet
Seem running a race with time.

I'm sick of the jostle of bustling crowds,
The wooden, set London stare,
The frozen face in the public place
Where the crowds swarm everywhere.

I'm Southern born, and a touch of sun
Has kindled a fierce desire
For a real sun-bake where the beaches take
From sunshine a Southern fire.

I'm wearied to death of the roaring wheels,
Of the traffic a-hustling by ;
I long for the plains where distance wanes
To a blend of the earth and sky,

For a breath of the wattle aflame in fire,
For the blue of a sun-bathed sky,
For the carolling sweet when the magpies greet
The dawn when the night-stars die.

I'm lonely at heart in the world's great hub,
There's an ache in my heart-strings sore
For the glimpse of a face that my thoughts *will*
trace,
That will come to my side no more.

For the khaki form of a soldier lad
At rest on the Anzac slopes,
Sad honour keeps where his body sleeps,
The wreck of a mother's hopes.

I'm lonely and lonelier still for the sweet,
Brief touch of soft finger-tips,
For homelier ways and the Southerner's phrase
From Australian sun-kissed lips.

I'm tired of the hum of the city street,
Of the walls, the fog, and the grime;
The pattering beat of the hustling feet
Seem running a race with time.

WHEN THE LIGHTS FLASH OUT

WHEN the lights flash up in London town,
When the streets are bright and gay,
The mantles hiding the lights are down
And the paint is scraped away,

When the bells ring out in London town,
When the boys come home to stay,
And khaki stained to an earthy brown
Is folded and packed away,

Hearts will sadden in London town
For those who will come no more,
Though peace is the gem of our victory's crown,
Some hearts will be sad and sore.

When the lights flash up in London town,
There are some that will never know ;
Brave sons that are welding our land's renown
" Out there " where the best men go.

When the lights flash up in London town
In the blaze of wild delight,
When the pride of Attila tumbles down
In the dust of his humbled might,

When the lights flash up in London town,
Her sons from the lands afar
Will weave Mother England a martial crown
From the leaves they plucked from war.

When sorrow and duty and pain have kissed,
And Fame in her tear-pearled gown
Leads Victory bright from the war-red mist
To us through the lights in town.

So here's to the hour when lights will blaze,
When the mantles and shades are down.
Love counts her rosary beads in days
Till the lights will blaze in town.

LONDON, *April 24, 1916.*

DAWN

BEFORE ANZAC, APRIL 25, 1915

THE plash of the salt waves awash phosphorescent,
The outlines of hills grim and mystic and grey,
The hush of the dawn ere the night curtain
vanish,
And morn brings the light of this fame-laden day.

The wave-bitten stretch of the grey sandy
beaches,
The beaches of Anzac the foreshores of death,
The blood of a thousand of braves soon to bleach
them,
The foretaste of hell in the shell's fiery breath.

Dark looming hills whether death lurks behind
them,
Or whether life waits me with garlands of fame ;
How can I banish the scenes of remembrance,
The dear tender thoughts of a much-cherished
name ?

Duty and danger call me from the darkness,
The hour of my baptism fiery draws nigh ;
I wonder and dream whether destiny waits me
With kisses of welcome or one brief good-bye.

Memory sings softly and croons of Australia,
Songs of my home in the Southern seas set,
Home and remembrance, the land of my fathers,
Scenes loved and lost to me can I forget ?

Flame of the wattle, the fire of the forest,
The scent of the woodbine and songs of the birds,
Incense of blossom from trees all a-flower,
The tinkle of bells from the wandering herds.

Carols of magpies when dawn is a-quiver,
The outlines of trees gaunt and ring-barked and
 dead,
Flash of the waratah blooming in glory,
The click of the parakeets' flight overhead.

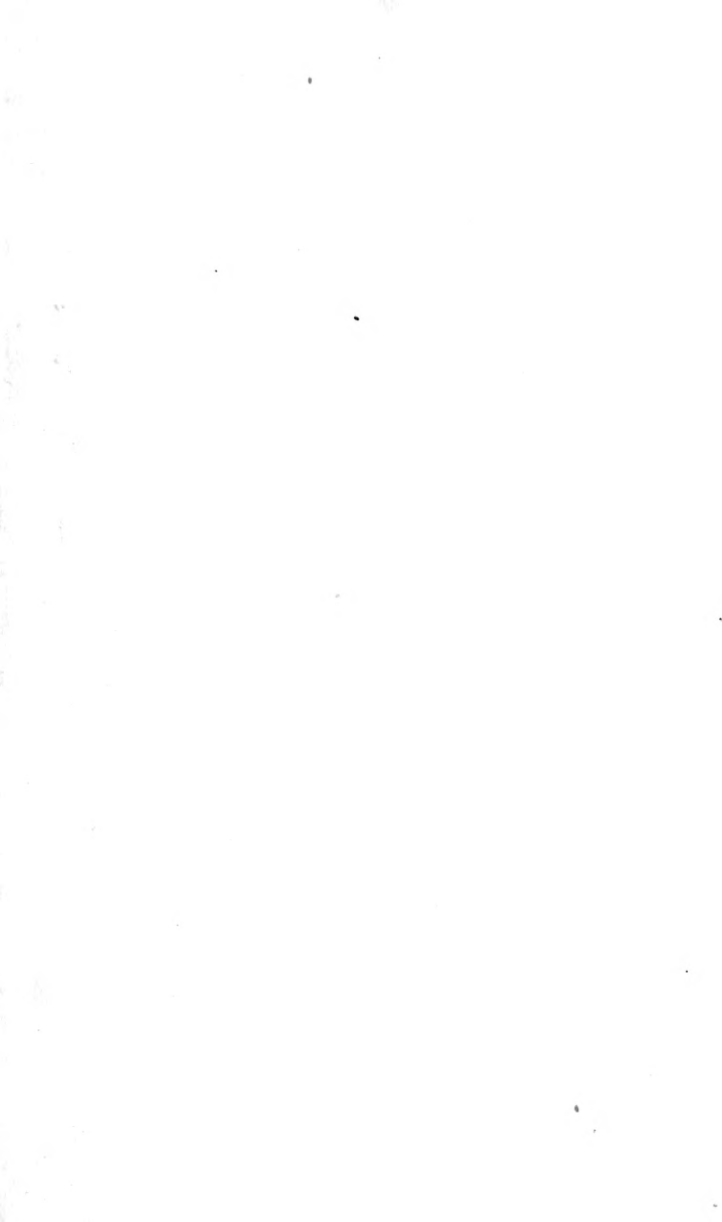
Glimpse of the waterfowl feeding and playing
Over the face of the sleeping lagoon,
Glint of the beams opalescent and gleaming,
Silver shafts hurled from the young crescent
 moon.

One little home in the midst of the fallow,
The grass springing green to the wooing of spring,
The green of the lucerne, the fruit trees in
 blossom,
My home way down under how memories cling.

Ah, whether I perish or whether I follow
The scenes of the chapter of blood to the last,
My soul will dwell eager for time without ending
On dearly loved days that are banished and past.

And now I make ready for death or his master,
This thought as the moments in flight hurry by,
If I live 'tis my privilege all for my country,
For Australia to live, for Australia to die.

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